



## **Halsall St Cuthbert's**

## **Early Years Overview**

### **Our hopes with pupils in the EYFS**

At Halsall St Cuthbert's we truly value the importance of Reception as the beginning of an exciting, learning journey for our children. For us it is vital that children are given opportunities to flourish into confident, happy learners at an individual pace from the get go. *'A child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances' (DfE, 2021).*

We believe, with the right support for individuals, the children in our Early years setting will gain the firm foundations they need ahead of not only the demands of KS1 and K21, but their distant futures. The Characteristics of Effective Learning are at the heart of our pedagogy and through these we enable our children to develop knowledge and skills that are transferable and promote their spiritual, moral and cultural development. We want our children to be engaged in their daily play and exploration of their classroom, along with being motivated to learn lots of new information, which they can process at their readiness and gain skills to investigate such new knowledge.

All staff in our Early years team work hard to ensure that learning is built upon, making room for fluent progression for learners who have the chance to reach their full potential. By the end of reception our aim is to develop confident individuals who love to learn and share their unique creativity.

### **How we embed our EYFS curriculum**

The planning of learning for our reception cohort begins before the children join us. During the summer term, we work closely with parents via a variety of induction meetings, visits and transition mornings, to ensure both staff and parents have a good understanding of the children's needs and expectations for learners, before they begin school. We provide children with welcome packs and opportunities to explore their new classroom, ahead of the summer holidays and prior to their start date in September.

An average day in our reception classroom is balanced carefully between child led and teacher focus led activities and inputs. Our environment is planned to encourage children to explore and enjoy both independently, with peers and with adults. We enhance provision regularly in line with children's needs and interests. We plan our curriculum to cover all areas of the Early Learning Goals, with daily learning opportunities that incorporate teacher led focus time, independent exploration learning tasks, as well as array of outdoor experiences. We recognise that all children are unique and we celebrate and welcome differences within our school community.

Objectives throughout the year are progressive in nature, they are covered in sequence in order for the children to achieve the early learning goals by the end of reception. Although topics and themes are flexible, changing in line with the Children's interests and needs, we have sets of core overall objectives that are covered from term to term. We have flexibility for in the moment planning to cultivate excitement for

learning and staff expertise allows for mastery learning to happen by connecting curriculum areas and extending Children's knowledge and understanding. *'All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected'* (Dfe, 2021).

The key skills that we want the children to learn and when, are carefully planned before the children start with us, they are adapted to meet specific cohort needs and to keep learning fresh. In line with our school calendar, some topics take place at specific times of the year, for example spring/ new life/ Easter etc. Our curriculum is varied and often includes visitors, parent workshops, and Children's work exhibitions to celebrate achievements. Exciting hooks to new topics are incorporated throughout the year with the aim to keep children engaged and progress through access to a breadth of curriculum.

When the children join us at Halsall St Cuthbert's the prime areas are our main focus, with Communication and Language particularly at the heart of our teaching and learning. We provide opportunities for the children to listen, talk and extend vocabulary daily. Once children build on this core area, specific areas of learning naturally follow.

With high expectations for achievements of the early learning goals and beyond, we have a daily timetable that includes 30 minutes phonics sessions in differentiated groups, an interactive 20-minute number input with follow on number activities and additional daily topic input. Other sessions that ensure coverage of other specific areas of learning and early learning goals, such as guided reading, guided writing and physical education, take place weekly. Our children enjoy specialist music sessions and exposure to MFL.

We use Twinkl phonics as our SSP programme for reading. We record children's phonics progress in phonics jotters as the year progresses. Home reading books are to levelled to the sounds the children are learning. For children with S&L needs we ensure their phonics programme links to the any individual targets allowing further opportunities. Time is dedicated to ongoing staff CPD related to any identified needs or areas of development.

Assessment takes place throughout the term, a vital part of this being shared through daily dialogue amongst the early years team. Staff work closely with one another to share information about children they have observed or worked with, such dialogue amongst colleagues allows for tailored planning and maximises new learning for individuals. We feel it is imperative to constantly monitor the children's needs and development through observations, conversations and building strong rapports with the children in our care, so we know how to move them on. Assessment is also tracked half termly when addressing Reading, Writing and Number. Staff moderate children's levels with colleagues and wider school communities via cluster meetings and the sharing of good practice both online and in meetings.

Children's progression in all areas is monitored, as the year develops children are grouped in differentiated groups for phonics and maths. We believe grouping allows for maximised learning opportunities and tailored, levelled support. For children who are identified as needing additional support, interventions are timetabled on an individual or grouped basis, so that these children have the opportunity to make progress. Upon finding gaps in learning or specific targets for children, we deploy staff to plug gaps through timely interventions. Children are given opportunities to work 1:1

or in small groups, depending on the support needed. Our environment is enhanced regularly to encourage the children to practise areas they need to develop, with an aim for pupils to independently practise their targets, during continuous provision.

We enjoy getting parents on board with their child's learning, parents have opportunities to work with the children in class throughout the year. We value the importance of parental involvement and work hard to build positive relationships, working in partnership to support their learning and development. *As EEF research has found 'Parental engagement in early years education is consistently associated with children's subsequent academic success' (EEF, 2018).* We do this through a range of approaches:

- Transition meetings and visits
- Enhanced transition for any children with additional needs or requirements
- Parent/teacher meetings
- Stay and play sessions
- Home learning books
- Class dojo
- Curriculum workshops
- Open door policy

## **Outcomes for pupils in the EYFS**

Through a full curriculum in the early years our pupils are ready for the challenges in year one and the years ahead. We identify next steps in learning through regular formative assessment, in addition to baseline and summative assessments that show where children are up to in relation to national expectations.

The impact of our EYFS curriculum is reflected with pupils leaving reception as happy, confident learners, who are ready for the next step into year 1. Children gain a deeper understanding of the 7 areas of learning by the time they leave reception.

Over the years our parents have shared views that their children have fantastic experiences during their time in our EYFS and that strong foundations are laid during their first year at school. We aim to exceed the National and Local Authority data for children achieving a Good Level of Development and almost all our children make more than the expected steps progress from their starting points.

The Early years team work closely with KS1 staff throughout the year to ensure teaching and pedagogy are reviewed and evaluated regularly, to ensure consistency and the best possible outcomes for all our infant pupils. We ensure that the areas we discuss and develop are reflected in changes and developments in our classroom practice. Curriculum leaders across the school visit the EYFS classroom to observe and gain an understanding of learning styles in the EYFS. Targets and areas for improvement are then discussed as a whole school team and acted upon immediately in order to regularly improve practise.